

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please replace all previous versions and listings of claims with the following listing of claims.

1. (Currently Amended) An apparatus and method for selectively or contemporaneously tenderizing and marinating meats or other selected food items, said apparatus comprising:

a bag comprising a mechanical tenderizing surface disposed therewithin,

wherein said mechanical tenderizing surface comprises a plurality of protuberances, and

wherein said protuberances are sufficiently rigid to at least one of deform and penetrate an external surface of the meat or other selected food item disposed within said bag, and to thereby tenderize same.

2. (Original) The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein said bag is formed from a non-porous plastic.

3. (Original) The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein said bag is reversible or invertible.

4. (Original) The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein said bag comprises at least one opening.

5. (Original) The apparatus of Claim 4, wherein said at least one opening is selectively sealable via a repeatably resealable mechanism selected from the group consisting of rib-and-groove mechanisms, ties, snap mechanisms, hook-and-loop fasteners, zippers,

grommet-and-tie assemblies, and rib-and-groove mechanisms incorporating slide bars to facilitate cooperative engagement of the rib-and-groove mechanism.

6. (Original) The apparatus of Claim 4, further comprising at least one sealed side.

7. (Original) The apparatus of Claim 6, wherein said at least one sealed side is selected from the group consisting of hermetically sealed sides, single-seamed sides, and pleated sides.

8. (Original) The apparatus of Claim 4, further comprising at least one selectively sealable side comprising a repeatably resealable mechanism selected from the group consisting of rib-and-groove mechanisms, ties, snap mechanisms, hook-and-loop fasteners, zippers, grommet-and-tie assemblies, and rib-and-groove mechanisms incorporating slide bars to facilitate cooperative engagement of the rib-and-groove mechanism.

9. (Original) The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein said mechanical tenderizing surface is integrally formed with said bag.

10. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of Claim 9, wherein said ~~mechanical tenderizing surface~~ protuberances ~~are~~ is selected from the group consisting of tenderizing teeth, "blunted" pyramidal-shaped tenderizing teeth, spikes of any selected angular dimension, rounded protuberances, dulled protuberances, tenderizing teeth of varying or alternating size, tenderizing teeth of varying or alternating height, tenderizing teeth of varying or alternating thickness, tenderizing teeth of varying or alternating angular dimension, tenderizing teeth of varying or alternating dispersion, tenderizing teeth of varying or alternating concentration, tenderizing teeth of varying or alternating pattern,

tenderizing teeth of varying or alternating grouping, flat tenderizing surfaces, and combinations thereof.

11. (Original) The apparatus of Claim 9, wherein said mechanical tenderizing surface is at least partially disposed on at least one inner surface of said bag.

12. (Original) The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein said mechanical tenderizing surface is in the form of a removably interchangeable tenderizing plate, said tenderizing plate comprising a mechanical tenderizing surface at least partially disposed thereon.

13. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of Claim 12, wherein said ~~mechanical tenderizing surface is~~ protuberances are selected from the group consisting of tenderizing teeth, “blunted” pyramidal-shaped tenderizing teeth, spikes of any selected angular dimension, rounded protuberances, dulled protuberances, tenderizing teeth of varying or alternating size, tenderizing teeth of varying or alternating height, tenderizing teeth of varying or alternating thickness, tenderizing teeth of varying or alternating angular dimension, tenderizing teeth of varying or alternating dispersion, tenderizing teeth of varying or alternating concentration, tenderizing teeth of varying or alternating pattern, tenderizing teeth of varying or alternating grouping, flat tenderizing surfaces, and combinations thereof.

14. (Original) The apparatus of Claim 1, further comprising a stoppered drainage spout carried by said bag.

15. (Currently Amended) An apparatus and method for selectively or contemporaneously tenderizing and marinating meats or other selected food items, said apparatus comprising:

a bag comprising a mechanical tenderizing surface at least partially disposed on and integrally formed with at least one inner surface of said bag,

wherein said mechanical tenderizing surface comprises a plurality of protuberances extending from said at least one inner surface of said bag, and

wherein said protuberances are sufficiently rigid to at least one of deform and penetrate an external surface of the meat or other selected food item disposed within said bag, and to thereby tenderize at least the external surface of the meat or other selected food item.

16. (Original) The apparatus of Claim 15, wherein said bag is formed from a non-porous plastic.

17. (Original) The apparatus of Claim 15, wherein said bag is reversible or invertible.

18. (Original) The apparatus of Claim 15, wherein said bag comprises at least one opening.

19. (Original) The apparatus of Claim 18, wherein said at least one opening is selectively sealable via a repeatably resealable mechanism selected from the group consisting of rib-and-groove mechanisms, ties, snap mechanisms, hook-and-loop fasteners, zippers, grommet-and-tie assemblies, and rib-and-groove mechanisms incorporating slide bars to facilitate cooperative engagement of the rib-and-groove mechanism.

20. (Original) The apparatus of Claim 18, further comprising at least one sealed side.

21. (Original) The apparatus of Claim 20, wherein said at least one sealed side is selected from the group consisting of hermetically sealed sides, single-seamed sides, and pleated sides.

22. (Original) The apparatus of Claim 18, further comprising at least one selectively sealable side comprising a repeatably resealable mechanism selected from the group consisting of rib-and-groove mechanisms, ties, snap mechanisms, hook-and-loop fasteners, zippers, grommet-and-tie assemblies, and rib-and-groove mechanisms incorporating slide bars to facilitate cooperative engagement of the rib-and-groove mechanism.

23. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of Claim 15, wherein said ~~mechanical tenderizing surface is~~ protuberances are selected from the group consisting of tenderizing teeth, “blunted” pyramidal-shaped tenderizing teeth, spikes of any selected angular dimension, rounded protuberances, dulled protuberances, tenderizing teeth of varying or alternating size, tenderizing teeth of varying or alternating height, tenderizing teeth of varying or alternating thickness, tenderizing teeth of varying or alternating angular dimension, tenderizing teeth of varying or alternating dispersion, tenderizing teeth of varying or alternating concentration, tenderizing teeth of varying or alternating pattern, tenderizing teeth of varying or alternating grouping, flat tenderizing surfaces, and combinations thereof.

24. (Original) The apparatus of Claim 15, further comprising a stoppered drainage spout carried by said bag.

25. (Currently Amended) A method of selectively or contemporaneously tenderizing and marinating meats or other desired food items without the proliferation of harmful bacteria resulting from the leakage and/or splatter of raw meat juices, particulate, or the like, said method comprising the steps of:

a. obtaining a bag comprising a mechanical tenderizing surface disposed therewithin, said mechanical tenderizing surface comprising a plurality of protuberances, said protuberances extending generally perpendicularly from a surface; and,

b. placing the meat or other desired food item within said bag for tenderizing same; and

c. at least one of deforming and penetrating an external surface of the meat or other desired food item to tenderize at least the external surface of the meat or other desired food item.

26. (Original) The method of Claim 25, further comprising the step of selectively introducing a marinade within said bag.

27. (Original) The method of Claim 25, further comprising the step of releasable sealing at least one opening of said bag via a repeatably resealable mechanism carried by said at least one opening, said repeatably resealable mechanism selected from the group consisting of rib-and-groove mechanisms, ties, snap mechanisms, hook-and-loop fasteners, zippers, grommet-and-tie assemblies, and rib-and-groove mechanisms incorporating slide bars to facilitate cooperative engagement of the rib-and-groove mechanism.

28. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 27, ~~further comprising the step of~~ wherein the step of at least one of deforming and penetrating comprises ~~of~~ repeatably striking and pounding said bag via one's palm, fist, or other blunt object, to forcefully drive at least a portion of said protuberances of said mechanical tenderizing surface into the meat or other desired food item to tenderize same.

29. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 27, wherein said ~~mechanical tenderizing surface is~~ protuberances are selected from the group consisting of tenderizing teeth, "blunted" pyramidal-shaped tenderizing teeth, spikes of any selected angular dimension, rounded protuberances, dulled protuberances, tenderizing teeth of varying or alternating size, tenderizing teeth of varying or alternating height, tenderizing teeth of varying or alternating thickness, tenderizing teeth of varying or alternating angular dimension, tenderizing teeth of varying or alternating dispersion, tenderizing teeth of varying or alternating concentration, tenderizing teeth of varying or alternating pattern, tenderizing teeth of varying or alternating grouping, flat tenderizing surfaces, and combinations thereof.

30. (Original) The method of Claim 29, wherein said mechanical tenderizing surface is at least partially disposed on at least one inner surface of said bag.